

WHERE'S MOSHE?

by Shlomo Katz

Parshas Tetzaveh

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The Midrash Ha'ne'elam (quoted in Torah Sheleimah) explains that Moshe Rabbeinu's name does not appear in our parashah because he said, after the sin of the Golden Calf (Shmot 32:32), "And now if You would but forgive their sin! -- but if not, erase me from Your book that You have written." Says the midrash: Moshe cursed himself conditionally, and Hashem in fact forgave Bnei Yisrael's sin as a result of his plea. Even so, he was erased from one of the lofty parashot in the Torah which speaks of the building of the mishkan. Moshe Rabbeinu's name should have been written in connection with every aspect and every mitzvah in this parashah, but it was erased. This teaches that the curse of a Torah scholar comes true even if it was uttered conditionally. [Until here from the midrash]

R' Menachem Mendel Kasher z"l (1895-1983; prolific author of Torah works) explains, citing earlier commentators: Even though the verse quoted above appears in next week's parashah, it is a general rule that the Torah is not necessarily written in chronological order.

Why was this parashah chosen as the one from which Moshe's name would be excluded? R' Kasher writes, again citing other works: Originally, Moshe, not Aharon, was to have been the Kohen Gadol. However, when Moshe refused to go to Pharaoh to demand Bnei Yisrael's freedom and he suggested that Aharon go in his place, the Torah says (Shmot 4:14), "The wrath of Hashem burned against Moshe and He said, "Is there not Aharon your brother, the levi?" He meant: Aharon would have been a levi, and you a kohen, but now it will be the reverse. Therefore, Moshe's name is omitted from the parashah that discusses the garments of the kohanim.

Some, however, explain the absence of Moshe's name in our parashah as a sign of distinction. The parashah opens, "Now you shall command Bnei Yisrael . . ." Because this parashah is the conclusion

of the description of the mishkan, Hashem wanted to give honor to Moshe by giving him a role in commanding Bnei Yisrael, without the usual introduction, "Hashem spoke to Moshe." (Torah Sheleimah)

"You shall make vestments of sanctity for Aharon your brother, for glory and splendor." (28:2)

What "glory and splendor" was demonstrated by the bigdei kehunah / the uniforms of the kohanim? R' Yehonatan Eyebchutz z"l (Germany; died 1764) explains:

Halachah requires the garments of the Kohen Gadol to fit him exactly. How was this possible? The Torah (Vayikra 21:10) refers to the Kohen Gadol as "the kohen who is gadol [literally "bigger"] than his brethren." Our Sages say that when a kohen was anointed to be High Priest, he actually grew until he was taller than the other kohanim. If so, how could the Kohen Gadol's clothing fit him exactly? After all, he had to be fitted for his new "uniform" before he was anointed, and after he was anointed, he grew taller!

The answer, says R' Eyebchutz, is that the Kohen Gadol's garments grew with him. This was the "glory and splendor" of the bigdei kehunah.

Why did Hashem arrange things such that this miracle became necessary? Was there not enough "glory and splendor" in the fact that the Kohen Gadol grew taller?

R' Eyebchutz answers: We read in Mishlei (15:30), "Enlightened eyes will gladden the heart; good news will fatten the bone." In effect, one who receives good tidings stands taller. Thus, if only the body of the Kohen Gadol "grew," we might have thought that it was a natural consequence of his promotion. Therefore, to make clear that a miracle had occurred, the Kohen Gadol's clothes grew with him. (Tiferet Yehonatan)

"Into the Breastplate of Judgment shall you place the Urim and the Tumim, and they shall be on Aharon's heart when he comes before Hashem; and Aharon shall bear the judgment of Bnei Yisrael on his heart constantly before Hashem." (28:30)

R' Shlomo Kluger z"l (1785-1869; rabbi of Brody, Galicia) explains how the Urim V'tumim connected with the "judgment of Bnei Yisrael."

Our Sages teach that there are two ways that the Jewish People can succeed in judgment. One way is by observing the Torah, while the second is by being unified. If Bnei Yisrael are unified, then even if they are idolators, they will be acquitted in judgment, the Midrash Rabbah says.

R' Kluger continues: "Urim" (אורים) represents the Torah, as in the verse (Mishlei 6:23), "Torah u'ohr" (אור)

/ "The Torah is light." "Tumim" (תומים) represents unity, as in Bereishit 25:24), "Tomim" (תומים) / "twins," and (Shmot 36:29) "Tamim" (תמים) / "paired." Thus, the Urim V'tumim alludes to the two ways that Bnei Yisrael can succeed in judgment. (Chochmat Ha'Torah p.184)

Parashat Zachor

"Aharon and his sons shall arrange it from evening until morning, before Hashem, an eternal decree for their generations." (27:21)

R' Chaim Palagi z"l (1788-1868; rabbi of Izmir, Turkey) writes that this verse from our parashah alludes to the events and miracles recalled by Parashat Zachor [which typically is read with this week's parashah in a non-leap year]. He explains:

How are we to understand the depth of Hashem's anger at Amalek? Surely He is not like a human who bears a grudge indefinitely! The Midrash Tanchuma answers this question with a parable: Bnei Yisrael immediately after the Exodus may be compared to a scalding bath; people avoid it until the first person jumps in and cools it off for other bathers, though he personally will be scalded. Similarly, by being the first to attack Bnei Yisrael, Amalek shattered the aura of Divine protection that surrounded them after the Exodus and gave other nations the courage to attack as well, notwithstanding that Amalek itself was severely punished. This is why Hashem will not let go of His anger, so-to-speak. Amalek is responsible for every future attack against Yisrael, the apple of Hashem's eye. Just as Amalek's sin is unending, so His anger is unending.

R' Palagi continues: Our Sages carefully chose a scalding bath as a metaphor. We find in Tanach and midrashim that Torah is compared to fire and Torah is compared to water. How can the Torah be like two things which are incompatible with each other?

The answer is that the affirmative commandments, which parallel the Divine Attribute of Chessed / Kindness, are like water and the negative commandments, which parallel the Divine Attribute of Gevurah / Strictness are like fire. [The affirmative commandments are to be sought after, like water and kindness, while the negative commandments relate to acts that are to avoided like fire and strictness.]

The Gemara (Shabbat 118b) states that Amalek attacked Bnei Yisrael because they transgressed Shabbat. [Amalek's attack is described in the Torah immediately after the violation of the commandment not to collect mahn on Shabbat.] Shabbat involves both a positive commandment ("Zachor") and a negative commandment ("Shamor"). For violating Shabbat, Bnei Yisrael deserved to be punished by fire or water, which, combined, make a scalding bath.

The above explains, as well, why our Sages emphasize that the holiday of Purim will never cease to be observed. All anti-Semitism that exists results indirectly from the audacious act of Amalek,

Haman's ancestor, who shattered Bnei Yisrael's appearance of invincibility. Just as the consequences of Amalek's act are felt throughout history, so the defeat of his descendant Haman will be celebrated throughout history.

Returning to our verse, R' Palagi writes: "Evening" and "morning" allude to the two readings of the Megillat Esther. This mitzvah is "an eternal decree," as just explained. (Birkat Mo'adecha L'Chaim: Drush Aleph L'parashat Zachor)

Letters from Our Sages

The letter below was written by R' Gamliel HaKohen Rabinowitz-Rappaport shlita, currently a rosh yeshiva of Yeshivat Shaar Ha'shamayim in Yerushalayim. It is printed in Tiv Ha'halachah p.144.

May The Merciful One remember for us the merit of Moshe, the loyal shepherd!

To all those who come here, whether regularly or occasionally, to pray or study in this mikdash me'at / minor temple [a euphemism for a shul] -- may Hashem be with them so they shall live!

Because Shabbat of Parashat Tetzaveh is the third anniversary of the founding of this mikdash me'at, I decided, with G-d's help, to write for the purpose of strengthening myself and others regarding the most important of principles--not to speak during davening. Besides the great improvement [in the quality of one's prayer] that will result directly from not speaking during davening, one who observes this also will be saved from a number of prohibitions that are spelled out expressly in the Shulchan Aruch.

First, one will be saved from the prohibition of being distracted while wearing tefilin (see Shulchan Aruch 28:1).

Likewise, one will be saved from the prohibition of speaking during kaddish (see Mishnah Berurah, beginning of ch.56 [quoting midrashim and other works that describe the punishment for speaking during kaddish]).

Also, one will be able to fulfill the requirement (Shulchan Aruch 124:4) to listen to the chazzan's repetition of shemoneh esrei, to concentrate on his blessings, and to recite "amen." [Halachah states:] If there are not nine people concentrating on the chazzan's blessings, they are practically blessings said in vain.

In addition, one who becomes accustomed to the above will not transgress the prohibition (Shulchan Aruch 151:1) on frivolous and light-hearted behavior in shul . . .

Therefore, let us give glory to our Elokim and, as one, accept Him as our One King. Let us accept upon ourselves to act with awe in the mikdash me'at, and in this merit may we soon see the building of the Bet Hamikdash.

From the one who blesses you with the priestly blessing with love.

The editors hope these brief 'snippets' will engender further study and discussion of Torah topics ('lehagdil Torah u'leha'adirah'), and your letters are appreciated. Web archives at **Torah.org** start with 5758 (1997) and may be retrieved from the [Hamaayan](#) page.

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